
CHAPTER 1
Introduction

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This Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (Final PEIR) and Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Study consists of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) for the Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration as revised (errata is presented in Chapter 2 of the Final PEIR), comments on the Draft PEIR, and responses to those comments. The public comment period for the Draft PEIR was from October 19, 2006 to January 16, 2007. Comments on the Draft PEIR were received through the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Program website, and by mail, fax, email, and comment cards submitted at public workshops.

PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

The public comment period for the Draft PEIR began October 19, 2006 with an announcement of the availability of the Draft PEIR. The Draft PEIR along with a Notice of Completion was provided to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to interested state agencies. A Notice of Availability was filed in Riverside, Imperial, and San Diego counties and published in *The Press Enterprise*, *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, *The Desert Sun*, *Imperial Valley Press*, and *Borrego Sun*.

The public comment period closed January 16, 2007. Public workshops were held in El Centro (November 15, 2006 and January 11, 2007), Bombay Beach (November 16, 2006 and January 11, 2007), Salton City (January 10, 2007), Palm Desert (January 10, 2007), San Diego (December 6, 2006), Oakland (December 4, 2006), and Sacramento (December 4, 2006). Only written comments were received during these workshops.

The Draft PEIR was made available online at DWR's Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Program website (www.saltonsea.water.ca.gov) and at 30 libraries in Riverside, Imperial, San Diego, and Sacramento counties. Approximately 2,000 copies of the Executive Summary with a CD of the entire document were distributed. Over 30,000 comment letters were received during the public comment period. These comments were considered and responded to during preparation of this Final PEIR. Responses to these comments are presented in this Final PEIR.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT COMPLIANCE STEPS

To certify the Final PEIR, the Resources Agency must find that the Final PEIR has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Under the programmatic approach for preparation of the Final PEIR, additional technical analyses and environmental compliance will be necessary prior to implementation of future actions. Findings of fact regarding significant effects of implementation need to be addressed in the future project-level analyses and environmental documentation. Mitigation monitoring and reporting programs related to future implementation also would be developed as part of project-level environmental documentation.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

CEQA requires lead agencies to respond to substantive public comments on a draft environmental impact report. All comments received during the public comment period are responded to in this Final PEIR. The range of possible responses includes explanation of the alternatives and analyses, making factual corrections, describing actions for the project-level analyses, selecting the preferred alternative, and explaining why comments do not warrant further agency response. When there has been significant public response, CEQA allows the lead agency to summarize or consolidate similar comments, as long as all substantive issues are represented. The Final PEIR contains responses to comments from agencies,

recognized interest groups, and unique comments from individuals. There were substantial numbers of letters that contained similar, if not identical, comments. Responses to these similar comments are provided once and the names of the commentors are provided with the representative comment letter.

FINAL PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT ORGANIZATION

The Final PEIR is organized in the following sections:

- **Chapter 1, Introduction** - This chapter introduces methods used in obtaining and reviewing comments on the Draft PEIR and discussion of compliance with CEQA;
- **Chapter 2, Edits to the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report** - This chapter presents errata to the Draft PEIR;
- **Chapter 3, Description of the Preferred Alternative** - This chapter presents the methodology used to select the Preferred Alternative, a description of the Preferred Alternative, and summarizes the Next Steps that would be considered in subsequent project-level analyses;
- **Chapter 4, Federal Agency Comments** - This chapter presents comments from federal agencies and responses to these comments;
- **Chapter 5, Tribal Agency Comments** - This chapter presents comments from the Torres Martinez Tribe and responses to these comments;
- **Chapter 6, State Agency Comments** - This chapter presents comments from State agencies and responses to these comments;
- **Chapter 7, Local Agency Comments** - This chapter presents comments from non-federal or non-state agencies and responses to these comments;
- **Chapter 8, Interest Groups Comments** - This chapter presents comments from Stakeholder Interest Groups and responses to these comments;
- **Chapter 9, Individuals Comments** - This chapter presents comments from individuals and responses to these comments;
- **Appendix A, Large Attachments to Comment Letters** - This appendix includes large attachments to comment letters. These attachments appeared to be included for informational purposes and did not include specific comments on the Draft PEIR;
- **Appendix B, Individuals that Submitted Form Letters** - This appendix presents a list of individuals that submitted one of the five form letters as comment letters on the Draft PEIR.